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General Assembly

Fiftieth session

Official Records

15th plenary meeting
Monday, 2 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Lamamra (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/50/444/Add.2)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to document A/50/444/Add.2.

In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 19 and 22 September 1995, Sierra Leone has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by the Right Honourable Sir Julius Chan, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Papua New Guinea

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Papua New Guinea.

The Right Honourable Sir Julius Chan, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Papua New Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I have pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Papua New Guinea, His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Julius Chan, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Sir Julius Chan (Papua New Guinea): It is an honour for me to address this Assembly on behalf of Papua New Guinea and in my capacity as the Chairman of the South Pacific Forum, which met three weeks ago.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral upon his election to preside over the General Assembly at this session, which also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations; and to congratulate also his predecessor for the efficiency and fairness with which he conducted the forty-ninth session.

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In my capacity as the Chairman of the South Pacific Forum and on behalf of Papua New Guinea, I warmly welcome the Republic of Palau, a sister country from our region, as the 185th Member of the United Nations.

As we mark this fiftieth anniversary, our celebrations are tempered by the fact that many of the dreams and ideals of the United Nations remain elusive. A world of greater freedom, prosperity and security - the fundamental goals of the United Nations Charter - unfortunately has not yet been attained. Much remains to be achieved by the United Nations, and that, to a great degree, depends on the collective support of each and every Member nation.

Papua New Guinea retains a strong belief that the international community cannot do without the United Nations, despite its shortcomings. If it was necessary in the aftermath of the Second World War, it is even more so today. In 50 years, the United Nations has contributed immensely to positive international interactions and has provided the codes of conduct that today we take for granted in our international dealings.

As one of many countries governed under the watchful eye of the United Nations before becoming a full Member at independence, Papua New Guinea is firmly committed to rejuvenating and strengthening the world's paramount international Organization.

Everything that needs to be said for the good of humanity has been said many times over in this very Hall. Noble and practical sentiments have always been expressed, often in the strongest terms. What too often have been lacking are political will and international statesmanship. Therein lies the difference between wishful thinking and turning our hopes and dreams for humanity into reality.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I am proud to say that Papua New Guinea pledges full commitment to the principles and objectives of the Organization.

We should together strive to build a better world for this generation and for those to come, in the next 50 years and beyond. In areas where the United Nations has been successful, we have to recommit ourselves, and where it has not been successful, now is the time to correct and rebuild inadequate systems. Our ultimate objective must be to promote a more effective, more accountable, more responsible and more caring United Nations, capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We must consider very carefully how we should usher in and embrace the twenty-first century. The end of one century and the beginning of another provides us with a natural period of reflection and self-examination. It is time to resolve to untangle, and rid ourselves of, all that has stopped us from creating a better world.

For that reform, we require a fresh start with greater determination, less cynicism, and hearts open more widely to the plight of all humanity. That is our collective challenge between now and the year 2000. The international community must demonstrate the necessary resolve, courage, vision and moral will to make this world a better place.

In setting the agenda for a better future, we must first understand our shared history. We must know that within the United Nations, our collective search for true peace is deeply rooted in events that took place just months before this Organization came into existence.

I speak of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They did not just change our world forever — these events changed the very way we think. Effectively the closing acts of the Second World War, they forced upon the world an urgency in the search for peace. It is an urgency that has never been lost, as morality and the heart of man battle to keep pace with technology in all its forms.

It is a race that the United Nations is running. It is a race that it cannot afford to lose.

If peace is in the hearts of men, and men in turn are the heart of nations, and nations the heart of the world, then we must fully realize just how profound a change we must undergo to find true peace. The extent to which the world discovers and embraces peace will be reflected in the way it faces up to other threats to humanity.

One of the challenges that I believe is eating away at the health and lives of all nations is the abuse of drugs — and it truly is a world problem.

The drug trade preys upon the youth of the world, shattering the lives of individuals and the peace and prosperity of communities. It has truly established its own foul "united nations".

The criminals — and they are criminals of the lowest order — have broken down barriers of nationality,

politics, race, religion and culture far more successfully than has this Assembly, as they ply their evil trade.

The networks they have established make multinational corporate giants look like small players, and have become so entrenched that they can be met only with an equally determined and broad-based international response.

That task must be placed at the door of the United Nations because, quite simply, no other group, no nation, can take them on alone.

Victory in the battle against the drug barons will require the same qualities needed in every other serious endeavour of the United Nations — political will and collective determination. Without these factors, we risk losing generations to destructive substance abuse. The price is too high. We must fight as one against this evil.

It is battles such as this that collectively we must take up. If we do not commit ourselves to fights for decency such as this one, we will never find the courage required to attain true life and peace in this world.

On the question of the expansion of the Security Council membership, we urge the five permanent members of the Council to join us in looking critically at the continuing relevance of their privileged positions and to consider how the Security Council might operate more effectively.

Papua New Guinea fully supports the permanent membership of Japan and Germany on the Security Council.

We are also aware of the need to support shared objectives and decisions with adequate resources. We are especially concerned that the ongoing financial difficulties should be resolved promptly, so that the United Nations can function to its full capacity.

No one should rest satisfied while we are faced with the perpetuation of social and economic disparities between and within nations — largely the result of parochial interests being pursued at the expense of genuine human concerns.

It is precisely this short-sightedness that has resulted in United Nations failure in some areas in the past.

Decency and justice must prevail in fact, and not just in words.

Papua New Guinea, as an active participant in and beneficiary of the Lome Convention between the European Union (EU) and the African Caribbean Pacific Group of States (ACP), is greatly honoured to currently hold the presidency and the chairmanship of all Lome Convention institutions, including the ACP-EU Joint Assembly, the ACP Council of Ministers and the ACP Committee of Ambassadors.

We feel confident that we will play a substantive role, under the Lome Convention, in addressing these inequities. We are also hopeful that the international trade and economic situation will improve with the advent of the World Trade Organization, with protections to ensure that the weak are not manipulated by the strong.

The problems of debt management and servicing continue to plague many developing countries. In trying to address them, we do not believe there are universal solutions. Every case must be dealt with individually and on its own merits. To do otherwise will simply cause serious social and political dislocation.

In this regard, international lending institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should demonstrate the requisite sensitivity and tact. We do not believe there is a single recipe for all problems, particularly as they relate to structural adjustment programmes of the type which we in Papua New Guinea have only recently ploughed through and adopted, after refinements to meet our own particular circumstances.

We live in a rapidly changing world, and it is a world dogged by confusion and distortion as it struggles to set new bounds of acceptability and compatibility.

With the decline of the cold war, our optimistic hearts thought we might at long last enter a period of peace, security and prosperity. Much of that optimism has today given way to doubt and concern.

The challenge to the resolve and the resources of the United Nations is arguably as great as it has ever been — in Bosnia, the former Soviet Union, Rwanda, Somalia and elsewhere.

Some of these trouble-spots have highlighted the United Nations problems and been a source of acute

embarrassment to the United Nations, which has too often been reduced to shameful impotence. The tragedy — the overwhelming tragedy — of this is that lives have been lost; people have died in huge numbers. The simple fact is that so many of them would still be alive today if the United Nations had more effectively fulfilled its role once it had decided to intervene.

When we lay this accusation at the door of the United Nations, let us make no mistake about it: we do not and cannot distance ourselves from these failings. We, the members, are the United Nations. We are responsible for what it does, or fails to do. We must lay much blame at the door of the Member States which, collectively, have so lacked political will and moral courage.

The reforms that will bring about increased political will and a more humanitarian view must occur within each and every Member nation. As the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, we would like to stress that if it wants to be a true world forum, then it should exclude no country, large or small.

At a time when reconciliation is superseding confrontation the United Nations, in accordance with the spirit of preventive diplomacy, should do its best to ease the tensions between both sides of the Taiwan Straits. Peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region are at stake.

On a global scale, we thought there was a hope for peace and prosperity on the horizon when the international community gathered in Rio for the Earth Summit on Environment and Sustainable Development.

We all pledged and acknowledged at the Rio Summit that something had to be done, because humanity was endangered by environmental degradation and climate change, and we adopted "Agenda 21" as the framework document.

All Governments took the document firmly in hand, but sadly their grip today appears to have slackened.

This experience and others call into question the usefulness of further global conferences, when the results of the ones already held are so generally disappointing.

We have had all the special world conferences, such as the ones in Barbados on small island developing States, in Cairo on population, in Copenhagen on social issues, in Berlin on climate change and the recent Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing — although in fairness to the latter, we should give it more time to produce results. We should consider a moratorium on such gatherings until we begin to see practical benefits coming through. The talking has been done; it is now time for action.

Environmental issues have become an all-encompassing international agenda. In the context of an interdependent world, we have a collective responsibility guided by the framework of international conventions to manage and develop our resources sustainably. The goals of sustainable development can be realized only through effective intergovernmental cooperation and through regional and international efforts.

For its part, the South Pacific Forum, made up of 16 nations, including Palau, which joined at the most recent Forum, has adopted both national and regional strategies to develop and implement environmentally sound programmes. Together with our fellow members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, we have become party to the Lakatoro Declaration on Oceania Cooperation on Denuclearization.

Papua New Guinea and the other 15 members of the South Pacific Forum recently expressed extreme outrage at the French Government's resumption of nuclear testing at Mururoa and resolved to review the status of their dialogue with France. In total disregard of our stand, France detonated its second nuclear test, at Fangataufa Atoll, at 9.30 a.m., Papua New Guinea time, on Monday, 2 October 1995. Consistent with the resolution of the South Pacific Forum nations, I now, regrettably, in my capacity as Chairman of the Forum, announce the suspension forthwith of all post-Forum dialogue with France.

I am pleased to report that the twenty-sixth South Pacific Forum paid close attention to the changed regional and world security situation. The Forum's concept paper "Securing Development Beyond 2000" looked at security issues well beyond the scope of military threats and military solutions. We focused on increasing security on a sustainable basis by promoting trade, transport and tourism in and for our region. We addressed the need for regional arrangements on environmental damage, natural disasters and other emergencies; as a result, we are working to have a comprehensive and detailed plan of action for the region.

That is a Forum document to which we are party; but for Papua New Guinea's part, we have our own national guiding document, "The Pacific Plan", for our relations with our Pacific neighbours.

In considering Pacific issues, the Forum was conscious that small island States are very vulnerable and have unusual needs. Their economies are constantly under threat from natural disasters such as cyclones, volcanoes and the looming danger of rising sea levels. When such States are hit by cyclones, it is akin to the ravages of war, and their economies and infrastructures face severe strains that seriously hamper and set back their development. Papua New Guinea therefore appeals to the international community to render support consistent with the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to assist their efforts to achieve greater self-reliance.

Small nations, including many in the Pacific, have suffered from declining international concern since the end of the cold war. Geo-economic considerations have largely replaced the geo-political considerations of the past, with new webs of alignment replacing the old and familiar ones. This has forced regionalistic tendencies upon nations, which in some respects has crippled moves towards a true global partnership.

Member nations will be aware of the internal crisis that Papua New Guinea has faced on Bougainville, one that has demanded enormous energy, time, patience and resources from the Government of my country. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that my Government, since taking office in August of last year, has wholeheartedly sought a successful resolution to the Bougainville situation, so far with notable success. Please allow me to express the appreciation of the people and the Government of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, and to the Secretary-General's office in particular, for the cooperation and understanding extended to us throughout this process. I am thinking particularly of the support the United Nations offered to the Bougainville Peace Conference of October last year, which, I am pleased to say, with the coming together of the South Pacific peace-keeping force, put flesh on the words of the Secretary-General on the value of regional approaches to conflict resolution. I believe that today the benefits of that wise policy are there for all to see in the situation on Bougainville, which has vastly improved over the past 12 months.

We also wish to assure the international community of our absolute commitment to human rights in dealing with this situation, as guaranteed in our Constitution. Indeed, it is a fundamental regard for the right of all our people to live free and peaceful lives that has driven me and my Government to search tirelessly for a resolution to this crisis.

There is no such thing as a minority group in Papua New Guinea because we come from numerous and diverse linguistic, cultural and social backgrounds. We have over 800 tribes and languages among 4 million people, in a country the size of Malaysia. In effect, we are all minorities in our land. As such, every group has a legitimate place in Papua New Guinea.

For us and for other developing nations, the focus of social issues falls squarely on the question of empowering people to eradicate poverty, get an education and live healthy lives. When that is achieved, the people are then in a position to expand their participation in the social and economic development of their nation. Without those basics, theirs is simply a battle for survival.

Increasing marginalization of the poor and of minorities remains a major problem within every country, regardless of economic or political status. We support the view that a new paradigm of development has to redefine the needs of people in terms of securing the basics of life such as housing, food and water. This can be achieved only by empowering people through decision-making and through direct participation in the development process.

In that connection, I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to a report to be prepared by the Secretary-General on the United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation, which I hope will receive the serious consideration it deserves.

One of the hallmarks of United Nations achievement has been the decolonization of peoples under colonial domination. As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we can proudly testify that the United Nations has generally fulfilled its duties and responsibilities with respect to the decolonization process. My country and many others represented in this Hall are testimony to the honourable achievements of this Organization in decolonization. Less than three weeks ago my people joyfully celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the independence of Papua New Guinea.

While we acknowledge and commend the United Nations for its decolonization achievements, its task is not yet complete. There are still many Territories under

colonial domination of one form or another. In recognition of the unfinished task relating to colonialism, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution proclaiming the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. This carries great hope for those who are still under the yoke of colonialism.

The end of apartheid in South Africa brought a great sense of relief and enlightenment, not just there but throughout the world. In that vein, colonialism — another blight on humanity — should be done away with and consigned to the pages of history as a degrading phenomenon of a bygone age.

There is a need to take a case-by-case approach in addressing the problems of the Territories under colonial administration to ensure that the wishes of the people concerned are adequately and realistically taken into account in determining their eventual political status.

In our immediate region, we are keen to see the decolonization process in New Caledonia allowed to take its due course, consistent with United Nations principles and practices. While we acknowledge the progressive attitude taken by the French Government with regard to New Caledonia, we are concerned that certain negative and counter-productive policies still exist. In that regard, we call on France to fulfil its decolonization responsibilities quickly and with dignity.

The eradication of colonialism before the year 2000 will place us on a more enlightened plateau. It will make the world a better place, more equipped to take on the challenges of the future with justice and dignity for all.

The United Nations undoubtedly stands for humanity. It provides the best possible avenue to peace, security and prosperity. While we all acknowledge the worthy objectives of the United Nations Charter, no country can claim that it has given full and complete support to the Organization.

Unfortunately, the United Nations has time and again been used for parochial pursuits, whether in respect of peace-keeping, human rights or environmental areas or in Security Council deliberations. In this very imperfect world, it would be naive to have ever expected perfect solutions from the United Nations. I say again that it is, however, an Organization that my Government strongly believes the international community cannot do without. If the United Nations did not exist, we would have to invent it. Fifty years on, our task is to reinvent it, to make it better, to allow it to fully and ably serve humanity. This is a most noble goal that must be pursued with pragmatic intensity and determination.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is the time for each and every Member nation to recommit itself to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We must do it for peace, and with the vivid recollection of Hiroshima and Nagasaki never far way. If we are to welcome the new century as we should, then the United Nations Charter provides the yardstick for the challenges ahead.

There are many global issues confronting us today, and the United Nations provides us with the best chance — the only chance — of handling them successfully. So let us act for the sake of all humanity. In this global age we must mend our ways. We must think with global heads and attend to humanity's needs with global hearts. Only then will our attitudes have kept pace with the realities we face. Only then can we leave a better world for our children.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Papua New Guinea for the important statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Sir Julius Chan, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Papua New Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal and Senegalese Living Abroad, His Excellency Mr. Moustapha Niasse, on whom I call.

Mr. Niasse (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): My country, Senegal, is very pleased to express to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral its warm congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. His election reflects how much the international community values the role his country — Portugal — has played in analysing and managing the major questions that mark the evolution of the world. It also values his personal qualities as a diplomat and a statesman, as well as his experience in the field of human relations, the fundamental basis of peace among nations.

I should like also to pay tribute to Mr. Freitas do Amaral's predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, who conducted the work for the year of the forty-ninth session with effectiveness and remarkable open-mindedness, thus earning the pride of all Africa.

Finally, I should like here, once again, to emphasize my country's support for the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His initiatives, his repeated actions and his determination to accomplish his noble mission in the service of peace, security and development, despite a particularly unstable international situation, have earned the gratitude of the world. History will owe him a debt of thanks.

Today, the United Nations has travelled through half a century. For 50 years the peoples of the Earth, following the Second World War, having wisely learned the lessons of the mistakes and set-backs of the history of human conflicts, have been engaged in an effort to create a new environment, an atmosphere of mutual understanding and of cooperation in solidarity, a framework within which mankind can finally realize that communal spirit, generosity and mutual respect are the best possible guarantees of peace, well-being, health and the environment, as well as the blossoming of society.

For 50 years, pursuant to the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter by the founders of our shared Organization, we have, stage by stage, laid the foundations for an international system that can provide collective security for all countries and, at the same time, create the best possible conditions for life in greater freedom.

If we consider the action that the Organization has undertaken since its creation — in particular, if we analyse the management of the many conflicts that arose here and there during the period of the cold war — we can see, without any shadow of doubt, that it has indeed proved to be an irreplaceable tool for the promotion and maintenance of peace.

Indeed, beyond the simple maintenance of international peace and security, the Organization remarkably distinguished itself in the struggle for decolonization, but, above all, in the establishment of a progressive system of specialized agencies, all of which provide highly valued assistance in the social, economic, humanitarian and cultural fields.

But, despite these recorded achievements, we have to admit that there is still a long road to travel, that a number of important challenges still have to be met, and new and bold initiatives taken, if we are to realize fully the ideals contained in the San Francisco Charter.

Patient preparation is being made for a historic reform of the structures of the Organization itself and, specifically, the Security Council. In this connection, Senegal unreservedly supports an increase in the numbers of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council with a view to strengthening the conditions and machinery available for the maintenance of peace.

It must indeed be accepted that the end of ideological confrontation has brought the world neither the peace nor the development that was so earnestly anticipated by the founding fathers of the Charter.

From Afghanistan to Angola, from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Somalia, from Liberia to the republics that emerged from the former Soviet Union, many conflicts continue to this day to resist our attempts to solve them. True, for some conflicts, such as those in Angola or the Middle East, significant progress has recently been achieved. And I wish to take this opportunity to welcome the new important step that has just been taken in the search for a settlement to the Middle East conflict with the signing, on 28 September in Washington, of the Taba Agreement.

In the case of other conflicts, such as that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a glimmer of hope is now showing over the horizon thanks to the concerted action of the Western Contact Group and the Contact Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as the European Union, the United States of America, the Russian Federation and other Governments of good will. This is also an opportunity for me to congratulate the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its member States for all their efforts and initiatives. They have made a considerable contribution to the results we have solemnly welcomed today.

In this regard, it is clear that the heroic struggle of the Bosnian people, underpinned by its leaders' acute awareness of their responsibilities, has made a powerful contribution to the new situation which the international community wishes to see strengthened and eventually result in a definitive peace for the former Yugoslavia.

The proliferation of conflicts resulting from the disappearance of blocs has had the positive effect of laying the foundation for a consensus on the machinery.

criteria, conditions and means to be used to ensure, organize and safeguard peace throughout the world. This consensus implies that we must have greater recourse to preventive diplomacy as an innovative concept to ensure that our system of collective security functions properly. This consensus also implies that the mandates of peace-keeping operations should henceforth be better defined in the light of the circumstances and objectives sought. The necessary means should therefore be collected and mobilized.

The importance which my country, Senegal, attaches to this question is commensurate with its tireless determination to work towards an effective security system that works because it is fully adapted to current realities. It is above all in this spirit that Senegal is a regular participant in the work of the Special Committee to review the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects.

Moreover, Senegal's position is in accord with the clear awareness in Africa of changes occurring throughout the world and which led our continent in 1992, at the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Dakar, to conceive and establish a mechanism for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. This African initiative, which contributes to the maintenance of peace and security throughout the world, should therefore be supported by the international community in order to reduce the practical ramifications of the lack of funds which, as everyone knows, is so sorely afflicting Africa, and enable it to achieve its legitimate ambitions through fulfilment of the aims of this machinery. With such support, our continent, Africa, would be able to devote itself further to settling the conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

Speaking of regional conflicts, in regard to the problem of Jammu and Kashmir — involving two neighbouring and fraternal countries, India and Pakistan, with which Senegal has friendly relations — my delegation would urge a definitive settlement that would allow these two great Asian nations to devote their efforts to establishing an atmosphere of peace conducive to integrated development and mutual benefit. The Organization of the Islamic Conference, in conjunction with these two countries, is giving careful thought to this matter.

It is universally recognized today that there can be no development without peace and stability. It is thus in the lack of development, poverty, marginalization and exclusion that we must seek the underlying causes of insecurity. We must therefore devise together a new system of collective life that will give everyone new reasons for hope on the basis of the spirit of solidarity and desire for peace in which the system is founded.

Such action should begin with a new awareness that, even if the expression "globalization of the economy" is now in vogue, the phenomenon goes far beyond the trend. Indeed, it involves, coevally, economics, finance and information. It is also and particularly relevant to the major problems of humanity's future, be it the question of protecting the environment, fighting threats against our collective health, drug trafficking or fighting organized crime. It has become obvious today that the solutions to these problems cannot but be global.

In the light of these new realities of today's world, it is clear that only a new conception of collective solidarity will allow us to avoid or at least mitigate the many serious consequences of poverty and exclusion that are so damaging to everyone. We must therefore make a collective commitment to defining a new social covenant for the future of mankind. The struggle against poverty in the countries of the southern hemisphere therefore assumes particular importance in this context.

Given the current globalization and liberalization in the economy of nations, the new World Trade Organization (WTO) — opened in Geneva a few months ago after having been christened at the historic Marrakesh meeting — should prove to be a new framework and cradle for a world open to fairer, more balanced and more human economic and trade relations between the countries of the North and South, in the spirit of the legitimate claims of the peoples of the third world. Here, I wish solemnly to reaffirm that the WTO carries with it the hopes of the world for a new era of profitable, balanced and sustainable trade for all.

From this perspective, the World Trade Organization, to the establishment of which the African countries contributed, should help those countries to participate more actively in the new international economic system.

Moreover, the globalization and liberalization of the economy should also encourage the developing countries to intensify South-South cooperation as an essential component of both the strategy for development and the means to ensure the integration of their economies in the new context and within the new aspirations of the international community for development in peace,

particularly of the countries of the South. The same is true of the need to boost commodity prices and to ensure equitable access to markets — to all markets — to allow our countries to develop genuine and effective trade policies. My country, Senegal, wishes unreservedly to stake its claim to this dynamic process.

On the occasion of this fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, from this rostrum I wish to make a solemn and heartfelt appeal on behalf of the development of Africa. This appeal reflects a major concern of African leaders and peoples. The United Nations, as we know, has devoted much fruitful attention to this matter, as witnessed by the convening in Geneva last July, within the framework of the session of the Economic and Social Council, of a high-level debate on African development.

Today, it is a truism to stress the dangers of Africa's marginalization. It is a danger, a real one, painful and serious. Although it is real, the danger is none the less unacceptable. It is therefore absolutely essential, for all those for whom solidarity and international cooperation continue to hold meaning, that it be averted.

I welcome the fact that the Secretary-General of the Organization that shelters us today is one of those who believes that there is no historical inevitability which Africa cannot overcome. Has not Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali decisively proved this by deciding to launch a special initiative for Africa, with the clear aim of breathing fresh life into international cooperation?

Through me, Senegal reiterates its total support for this initiative, which is particularly fortunate since it dovetails with all the priorities Africa has set for itself — namely, food security, water control, social and human development, democracy, mobilization of resources and, finally the struggle against poverty.

It should also be recalled that the Head of the Senegalese State, His Excellency President Abdou Diouf, has been tirelessly devoting himself for a long time now to seeking global solutions to the problems of Africa, particularly the excruciating question of debt which is delaying the development of African countries.

Thus, during his first term of office as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, he was the initiation of the convening in 1986, for the first time in the annals of the United Nations, of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to Africa's critical economic situation.

Similarly, Senegal welcomed the conclusion in Paris in 1994 of the international Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, and would like to stress here that this Convention must be put into effect very soon and that the allocation of the considerable resource that would be needed to uproot this scourge from the African continent should be accelerated. This is the task which for years now has been the special concern of the Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahara.

We cannot speak about development without addressing the question of respect for and protection of, fundamental human rights and freedoms, which have today become a universally recognized requirement. Everyone is aware of how wedded Senegal is to this requirement of our modern times that, in view of the changes which have affected the world since the end of the 1980s, all African countries, integrate this policy into their development policy as an unavoidable dimension of progress.

To conclude, may I emphasize once again that the new international context and the multi-dimensional nature of the problems that must be solved require concerted action by all of us: integrated action, solidarity among all partners — Governments, agencies and bodies, public or private — that mould the life and the evolution of the human international community.

Solidarity is the cement and also the guarantee of this common approach, which is inspired by what is needed for mankind to survive. Solidarity is first and foremost a profound conviction that we all belong to one and the same world, whether it be developed or underdeveloped. Solidarity also entails a duty to face up to our common problems and our common challenges, whether we come from the North or from the South. Solidarity is, finally, a collective will to build the future on the basis of a partnership from which none are excluded. Solidarity is also a common commitment voluntarily to promote the collective progress of all mankind. It is in the name of all the nations that are so greatly devoted to the mission of man on earth that we must nurture solidarity, cooperation, friendship and brotherhood.

In this spirit and at this juncture in the history of our planet when hope has been rekindled by the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of an organization — the United Nations — without which the

world would not be what it is today, we solemnly express our ardent hope that this 1995 session, the fiftieth in the history of the United Nations, will be the dawn of a new era in which we shall witness the realization of all our ideals of peace, justice and progress, to the greatest benefit of future generations, to which it is our duty to hand over a world of peace, a world of security and a world of development.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Foreign Minister of Australia, His Excellency Senator Gareth Evans.

Mr. Evans (Australia): I congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. His election is a tribute both to him and to Portugal, and Australia will work with him to ensure that this historic fiftieth session is as memorable as it could possibly be.

I join in warmly welcoming, as the 185th Member State of the United Nations, our fellow South Pacific Forum member Palau.

If we are to effectively prepare for our future we must first be able to clearly see our past. If we are to see where we must go, we must know where we have been: we must be conscious of our failures, but we should be proud of our successes.

The structure of today's world community — of sovereign, self-determined, independent States working together on the basis of equality in a framework of international law — simply did not exist before the Charter of the United Nations came into being. There were imaginings of it in the minds of many for a very long time, and we saw emerge between the two world wars a pale approximation of it with the League of Nations. But it was at that special moment in San Francisco, 50 years ago, that today's concept of a community of nations was first truly born. And that concept has passed the test of 50 years of life.

Gifted though the authors of the Charter were, they would I think be awed to see how very much their vision of a globalized world has now been answered, and exceeded. Today's world is one world, a world in which no individuals and no States can aspire to solve all their problems or fulfil all their dreams alone. The ideas of San Francisco have entered into the unconscious of people all over the world. Those who refuse to acknowledge the global character of our world, or who recoil from it and retreat into unilateralism or, worse, isolationism, have simply not understood the new dynamics that are at work. Ours is an age in which we are called to more, not less, cooperation — and to ever more, and more responsible, sharing of our common destiny.

The ideas of San Francisco have assumed many concrete forms, which have deepened and expanded over the last five decades. States now habitually, virtually automatically, conduct their relations with each other on the basis of the United Nations Charter. We have added continually to the corpus of international law and agreements made pursuant to the Charter, in ways that have touched every aspect of modern life. We have built institutions that have sought to deliver to the peoples of the world their most basic needs — for peace and security, for economic well-being, and for dignity and liberty.

It was natural that following a devastating world war and the hideous brutality which accompanied it, the Charter would have at its heart the maintenance of international peace and security. So far, anyway, we have passed the test of ensuring that the world would never again be subjected to global conflict. The United Nations has been, of course, deeply challenged in the maintenance of peace, from the very beginning and ever since. There are areas in which its attempts to maintain and restore peace have been flawed, and where the United Nations has faltered. But for all that has gone wrong in places like Bosnia and Somalia and Rwanda we should not forget the successes, like those in El Salvador, Cambodia and Mozambique. To go back a generation, no one should forget the role that was played by the Security Council and the Secretary-General in that desperate month of October 1962 when the hands of the clock were seconds before midnight and the world did face potential nuclear holocaust. And no one should forget the role that, for example, the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty has played in falsifying the almost universal prediction in the 1960s that within two decades there would be 20 or more States possessing nuclear weapons.

In development, in seeking to fulfil its commitment to promote "social progress and better standards of life" the United Nations has laboured hard, sometimes in very difficult circumstances. The gap between developed and developing countries remains unacceptably high; there have been and continue to be difficulties with the availability of resources for development assistance; and we have to acknowledge the awful reality, according to the World Bank, that 1.3 billion of our people still live

in absolute poverty. But in food and agriculture, in employment and labour standards, in health, in education and in building the infrastructure so vital to communities in the developing world — roads, bridges, water systems — the United Nations and its agencies have worked relentlessly in the service of the human family. It is because of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) that today 80 per cent of the world's children are immunized against six killer diseases. And this is just one of hundreds of similar stories that the United Nations can and should be telling.

Basic to the United Nations concept of the world community was that it should operate under and foster the development of law, justice and human rights. A fundamental commitment of the United Nations is to establish conditions under which justice may prevail, international law will be respected and peace can be built. In fulfilment of this charge, the United Nations has provided the setting for the negotiation of over 300 major treaties, including in such crucial fields as arms control, transport, navigation and communications. This very practical area of international cooperation has formed the framework of a globalized world.

The Charter of the United Nations speaks not just of securing better standards of life, but of those better standards being enjoyed "in larger freedom". And the articulation, development and implementation of human rights standards across the whole spectrum of rights — economic, social and cultural as well as political and civil — has been one of the most important and constructive roles of the United Nations. One of the worst of all denials of personal and political freedom was that imposed by apartheid. The triumph over that evil was above all a victory for those South Africans and their leaders whose freedom and dignity apartheid had so long denied. But it would ignore the testimony of history not to recognize the importance of the role played by the General Assembly and the Security Council in creating the conditions for that to occur.

For the people of this world, no political right has been more important than the right to self-determination. The achievements of the United Nations in this field alone are testimony to the indispensable role it has played in human affairs, with hundreds of millions of people having exercised their right to self-determination in these past 50 years. It is the great movement of decolonization, as much as the cold war and its aftermath, that defines the modern world as we now know it, and which shapes the world's agenda for the years that lie ahead.

The United Nations of the future will need to be, above all, an organization which works and speaks for all its Members, no matter how large or small, and whose legitimacy is thus without question. It must be an organization better oriented to performance, to delivery to people of the things they need and have a right to expect. And it must be an organization which seeks to reintegrate, and better coordinate, the implementation of the three basic objectives of the United Nations so clearly articulated at San Francisco 50 years ago: the objectives of peace — meeting the need for security; of development — meeting economic needs; and of human rights and justice — meeting the need for individual and group dignity and liberty.

In the peace agenda, disarmament and arms control continue to be of crucial importance, and a major challenge immediately ahead will be to maintain the momentum of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The decision by the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to extend the Treaty indefinitely was, and remains — despite what has happened since — the right decision. The work on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty must be brought to conclusion, as promised, in the first half of 1996. We must also begin as soon as possible negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapons purposes. A further helpful step, although more difficult to achieve, would be a regime requiring all States to declare and account for their present stocks of fissile material. The basic objective in all of this is to move towards the goal that is agreed by all — and it should never be forgotten that it has been agreed by all — namely, that we will, ultimately, eliminate all nuclear weapons.

It is in this context particularly that the decisions by France and China to continue nuclear testing are to be so strongly deplored. The environmental consequences are bad enough of setting off an explosion more than five times the size of that which destroyed Hiroshima — as France did yesterday on the fragile atoll of Fangataufa in Australia's Pacific neighbourhood. But the nuclear policy consequences are even worse. This is not the time to be reinforcing nuclear stockpiles and asserting their ongoing deterrent role: the world wants and needs to be moving in the opposite direction.

This is the time to be negotiating away those stockpiles, and building verification systems of the kind we did with the chemical weapons Convention — which

still needs to be ratified to come into effect — and I urge those States that have not yet acceded to that Convention to do so urgently. This is not the time to be encouraging scepticism about the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, as the Chinese and French tests are doing. It is, rather, the time for the nuclear Powers to be encouraging the universal observance of that Treaty in the way that they best can: by showing that they themselves are absolutely serious about moving to eliminate nuclear weapons from the face of the globe. The best way for them to do that right now is for France and China to immediately end their testing programmes; for all the nuclear-weapon States to sign the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties that now exist in the South Pacific and elsewhere; and for those States to commit themselves wholeheartedly to negotiating a genuinely comprehensive, zero-threshold comprehensive test-ban treaty into place by the middle of next year.

The past few turbulent years of United Nations experience on the ground in peace-keeping and peace enforcement has underlined the need for it to improve the effectiveness of its work in these important fields. Australia has welcomed the Secretary-General's further work in this area in his very lucid January 1995 "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'". In our own contributions to the debate on these issues, we have argued for the clearest possible thinking to be given to the achievability of objectives right across the whole spectrum of responses to security problems — from peace-building to peace maintenance to peace restoration to peace enforcement.

We have consistently argued, and I make the point again very briefly today, that if the United Nations is to be able to meet effectively the security challenges of the post-cold-war world it must begin to devote more resources to preventive strategies than to reactive strategies. It just makes more sense to concentrate on prevention than on after-the-event peace restoration, both for inter-State conflict and in the unhappily now far more common case of intra-State conflict. Violent conflicts are always far more difficult and costly to resolve than non-violent disputes, and failed States are extremely difficult to piece back together.

All that said, it has been encouraging to see the progress made in recent days towards resolving the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and in moving the Middle East peace process a substantial new step forward. The United Nations should always be prepared to lend its support and encouragement to preventive diplomacy and to peacemaking efforts taking place outside the formal framework of the United Nations system, and it should remain particularly alert to the opportunities envisaged in the Charter for advancing the peace agenda through regional organizations. In the latter context we in the Asia-Pacific have been very pleased with the rapid evolution of the new Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) over the last two years as a new vehicle for dialogue and trust and confidence-building, in our own region.

Particular attention has been given recently, as we all know, to the question of improving the rapid reaction capability of the United Nations, and I warmly commend the work that has been done to clarify our thinking on these issues by the Netherlands and Danish Governments, and particularly in the major Canadian report, "Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations", just presented to the Assembly. The very useful emphasis of the Canadian study is on the idea of improving the United Nations system's capability at the centre first, particularly in the area of operational planning, and thereby encouraging greater willingness by troop contributors to give practical and more urgent effect to stand-by arrangements. No organizational arrangements will ever substitute for clear-eyed decision-making by the Security Council on the responses and mandates that are appropriate to particular situations, but the implementation of changes of this kind should make us much better equipped as an international community to deal in future with situations like that in Rwanda, where last time our response was so tragically inadequate.

The security agenda tends to dominate most popular perceptions of the United Nations role, but we in the international community must never allow our attention to be diverted from the demands of the development agenda, now as pressing as ever. When historians hundreds of years hence look back at this last half century, the cold war and its aftermath will not be the only great international current to be remembered; it will be the giant step of decolonization that looms at least as large.

Decolonization led to the emergence of a world economy which for many years has been seen as divided principally into two categories, the developed and the developing countries. But today, the picture is more complicated. Mainly for reasons of change in technology and information systems, we do now live in a global economy. No part of it is entirely separate from the whole, and no one can act in that global economy in an effective way, entirely alone. Because we live in that kind of economy a key part of our action to deal with the problems of development must, accordingly, be

multilateral, and the key problem facing us, both multilaterally and in our bilateral, donor roles, is that within the global economy the gap between rich and poor countries, despite all efforts to resist this, has grown. The fact that some 1.3 billion of the 5.7 billion people alive today live at an unacceptable level of poverty is morally insupportable, and dangerous.

The United Nations of the future must, as a matter of the most urgent priority, forge a new agenda for development and reshape its relevant institutions to implement that agenda effectively. This is as important as any task it faces in the service of the human family and in recreating itself as an institution fit for the twenty-first century. The agenda is available for all to see. It has been fully described in the six global conferences held by the United Nations in the past four years — the conferences on children, the environment, human rights, population, social development, and now women. There have also been important studies by the international financial institutions and by academic institutions. We know now what we need to do. We must resolve, politically, to do it.

In pursuing these various themes it is important, however, for us not to lose sight of those geographical regions where particular focus is still required, and where the United Nations role is more vital than ever. Africa's influence and importance continues to be felt throughout the world in every field of human activity and culture. Exciting political developments, including the ending of apartheid, have been accompanied by major new efforts to restructure and reform national economies. Those efforts demand the continued support of the international community, and in particular the United Nations system. Other regions where the United Nations needs to play a particular role to facilitate economic and social development are the Central Asian republics, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and in a number of areas in the Indian Ocean region.

The Indian Ocean region is one where Australia, as an Indian Ocean country as well as an Asia-Pacific country, has been promoting, with others in the region, both governmental and non-governmental efforts to enhance regional cooperation, particularly on economic and trade issues. The success to date of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APECC) in developing cooperative strategies in the Asia-Pacific region to promote prosperity and stability, complementing the United Nations broader work for these goals at the international level, does offer one possible model for the countries of the Indian Ocean Rim to consider.

The institutions of the United Nations relevant to economic and social development are urgently in need of reform. The General Assembly has created the high-level Working Group needed for political consensus on this. That must complete its work in this fiftieth anniversary year, and it must do so creatively, setting aside past vested interests in the system. We must implement the development agenda of the future in a way which ensures a productive and fair place in the global economy for all States.

The complex and interlinked system of principles, legal regimes and machinery that the United Nations has established to promote human rights is one of its major achievements. It must be built upon and strengthened, recognizing always that the human rights whose universality and indivisibility we assert are about economic and social and cultural rights just as much as about the civil and political rights on which the developed countries tend to focus so much attention. Priority must be given to the major international human rights instruments and machinery and the committees which monitor their implementation. By this means we can provide a frank, non-confrontational and constructive dialogue amongst States parties.

The advisory services and technical-assistance activities of the United Nations can also play a role in promoting the observance of human rights and the implementation of democratic principles around the world. Programmes to help countries develop their own national institutions and systems to promote and protect human rights will enhance their capacity to prevent violations and, accordingly, make a direct contribution to human security.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized enough that the peace and development and human-rights agendas I have mentioned are all interlinked. We need to avoid the compartmentalization that occurred throughout the cold-war years, in which peace-and-security issues, development issues and human-rights and justice issues were isolated in completely different conceptual and institutional boxes. Any viable modern concept of international peace, let alone peace within States, must recognize that peace and security and development are indissolubly bound up with each other. There can be no sustainable peace without development and no development without peace. And human rights, in the fullest sense, as I have described them, have to come into the equation too. There is unlikely to be sustainable peace

in any society if material needs are satisfied but needs for dignity and liberty are not.

No agendas of substance, no matter how clear in concept, how well-coordinated in principle they may be, will mean anything to people if they are not able to be implemented through effective organizational structures and instruments. There has been widespread recognition in recent years, as we all know, that the structure of the United Nations that grew up during the past 50 years is simply not adequate to the tasks of the next.

We now have an embarrassment of riches with respect to ideas and proposals for change to the United Nations. Just as it is urgent that we complete work on "An Agenda for Development" in this fiftieth year, it is equally urgent that we complete the work of the high-level Working Group on the reform of the United Nations system also within this fiftieth year.

The structural problem that it is probably the most urgently necessary to resolve, if the credibility of the whole United Nations system is to be maintained, is that of the Security Council. The debate on this subject has been long and detailed and is familiar to all of us. Australia's definite view is that it has been going on for long enough, and we are now at the time when action is required. Last year, we submitted some illustrative models on the basis of which consideration could be given to an expansion in the membership of the Council. Others have made very specific proposals. Again, in this field there is no lack of ideas. What we have to do now is move to the stage of forging political consensus on a new Security Council, which will be effective, represent the whole membership of the United Nations and sensibly reflect the realities of today and the future, not those of 1945.

There are many structural changes and personnel reforms that could and should be made within the United Nations system to improve its efficiency. But ultimately the quality of that system depends on what we are prepared to pay for it.

It is important to appreciate at the outset the order of magnitude of the sums we are talking about. The core functions of the United Nations, involving the Headquarters in New York, the Offices in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, and the five regional Commissions, cost just US$ 1.2 billion between them. To take just one comparison, last year the annual budget of just one Department in one United States city, the New York Police Department, exceeded that $1.2 billion by $600 million.

The total number of personnel needed to run those United Nations core functions is around 10,700. Compare the local administration of my own national capital, Canberra — again, just one city in one of the 185 States Members of the United Nations — which has some 22,000 employees on the public payroll.

The cost of United Nations peace operations last year, in Cyprus, Western Sahara, the former Yugoslavia and 13 other locations, was $3.2 billion. That is less than what it takes to run just three New York City Departments: the Police Department, the Fire Department and the Department of Correction.

If we add to the core functions of the United Nations all the related programmes and organs, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), we are still talking about a total of around 33,000 people and a total budget, including both assessed and voluntary contributions, of $6.3 billion. That sounds a lot — rather more than just for the core functions — but it is not quite so much when one considers, for example, that the annual global turnover of just one international accounting firm, Price Waterhouse, is around $4.5 billion.

If we go further than that and add to the core functions and related programmes all the other specialized programmes and agencies of the entire United Nations family — agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and put into the equation as well the Bretton Woods institutions — the World Bank group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which between them employ nearly 10,000 people and spend $5 billion annually — we are still talking about total United Nations-system personnel of just around 61,400 and a total United Nations-system dollar cost of $18.2 billion.

A total of 61,400 may sound like a lot of people, and it is, but perhaps it is not so many when we consider that more than this number — 65,000, in fact — are employed by the three Disney theme parks in California, Florida and France. Three times as many people sell

McDonald's hamburgers around the world as work for the United Nations system. And $18.2 billion might be a lot of money, but just one major multinational corporation, Dow Chemical, which happens also to have 61,000 employees world wide, has an annual revenue in excess of $20 billion.

When we put the financial problems of the United Nations into this kind of perspective, as I think we ought to do more often, the solutions do not really look quite so hard. Surely, between us, with our combined defence expenditure alone of around $767 billion, the 185 Member States can find that kind of money. But, of course, the problem of paying for the United Nations has now become critical because of the unwillingness or inability of so many of the Member States, including the biggest of us all, to pay their assessed contributions, notwithstanding that the cost of these for the major developed-country contributors works out at between $7 and $15 per head per year — the price of no more than one or two movie tickets in this city.

We have a short-term problem, which I believe can and should be solved within the United Nations system by allowing the United Nations to borrow from the World Bank. But we also have a longer-term problem which, frankly, does not look as though it is going to be solved, however much we continue to work at adjusting assessment scales, exhort Member States to pay up and remind them of the consequences under Article 19 of the Charter if they fail to do so.

So what are we to do about all this? In my judgement, it is time to look again — this time very seriously indeed — at the options which exist for supplementing Member States' contributions with external sources of finance. The practicability of collecting a levy on every one of the $300,000 billion worth of foreign-exchange transactions that now occur every year remains to be fully assessed, but simple arithmetic tells us that if we strike a rate of just .001 per cent for such a levy, which hardly seems likely to have any significant economic consequences, we could generate $3 billion in revenue. Moreover, we know that if we could impose a levy on international airline passengers of $10 for every international sector flown, which would be very easily collectible indeed, we could also raise $3 billion: nearly the whole annual cost of United Nations peace operations.

There are also other revenue options that, to a greater or lesser extent, have the same rational nexus with United Nations costs as these do, in that they involve transactions which are international, take place within a framework of law and cooperation provided by the United Nations and can be harmed by a breakdown in international peace and security — precisely the areas in which the United Nations has a fundamental responsibility.

But traditionally, a threshold objection of principle has been mounted against any such talk. Member States, it has been said, should themselves wholly own the United Nations system; if the Secretariat had direct access to revenue other than assessed contributions of Member States, who knows what adventures it might be inclined to get up to. But ownership and control are totally separate issues. The United Nations operates on a sovereign-equality principle, which means that, for example, those six States which between them pay at present over 65 per cent of the United Nations regular budget should under no circumstances have greater authority over how it is spent than the overwhelming majority of Members, each of which pays much lesser proportions of the total.

Whatever the funding sources involved, the crucial question is surely how and by whom the money is spent. It is absolutely crucial that there be appropriate control of funds by Member States, with all the accountability mechanisms that implies. But that does not mean that those Member States should themselves have to provide all the funds in the first place.

In talking about these issues to many of my ministerial colleagues from a wide range of countries and across all continents over the last few days, I have found the almost unanimous reaction that the present, and likely continuing, financial crisis of the United Nations demands that these issues be looked at again, without any prejudgements of the questions of principle or practicability involved.

I would suggest accordingly that the time is right for the Secretary-General to convene once again a high-level advisory group, like the Volcker-Ogata group established in 1992, with a mandate to think explicitly through what has hitherto been more or less unthinkable: how to fund the United Nations system in a way that reaches out beyond the resources that Member States are prepared to put directly into it. Such a group could report to or work with a committee of representatives of Member States — one in existence already, such as the High-Level Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations or one newly created for the purpose.

A great deal of work has already been or is being done on many of these issues, and it should be possible

for such a group to report within six months or so — certainly within a year. The parameters of the debate have to be changed, and for that to happen we need an authoritative new statement of the art of the possible.

Here, as elsewhere, we have to move forward. We have to look to new ideas. We have to encourage humankind's ingenuity to search for better ways for States to deal with each other as relationships take new shape, as new States emerge and as problems which could not have been conceived of a few years ago become the challenges of the day.

We will fail to meet those challenges if we adhere solely to the ideas and dogma of the past. The United Nations was itself founded on a mixture of idealism and pragmatism. Both were essential to build a new world 50 years ago, and in the past 50 years that idealism has not disappeared. It was an important force in bringing about the end of the cold war, and, more than anything else, it was idealism that lay behind the process of decolonization, which so shifted the tectonic plates of history.

To some idealism will always be the enemy of practicality. But to others it will always involve, more than anything else, the courage to take advantage of new opportunities, ensuring that at least some of today's ideals will become tomorrow's reality. Perhaps now, 50 years beyond San Francisco, we need to renew that idealism and walk down some of those uncharted paths that idealists have always been prepared to tread.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French):* I call on the Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, His Excellency Mr. Domingo Siazon.

Mr. Siazon (Philippines): It is with special fervour that I congratulate Mr. Freitas do Amaral, on behalf of the Philippine delegation, on his election as President of the United Nations General Assembly in this landmark session. Let me also express the gratitude of my delegation to Mr. Amara Essy, the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, for the excellent leadership which he provided us at our forty-ninth session. Our tribute goes also to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and to the men and women of the Secretariat, who, in the course of the past year, carried out their indispensable tasks under circumstances of great difficulty for them and for the Organization.

In three weeks, most of the world's Heads of State or Government will gather in this Hall to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the United Nations. They will no doubt recall how the founding fathers of our Organization convened in San Francisco animated by their resolve to transform the world. It was a world devastated by a global war. Like most wars, it was ignited by the propensity and ability of nations to use force to acquire territory and resources, to avenge past wrongs, or to promote, at the expense of others, the security and welfare of their people.

This was the world which the United Nations was created to transform. Our founding fathers were idealistic enough to insist that questions of war and peace had ultimately to be resolved in the hearts and minds of men and nations; but they were realistic enough to recognize that practical measures and considerations were necessary to deter the use of force and mitigate its effects. They were realistic enough to concede that States that held a preponderance of military force had to be allowed a large measure of authority and responsibility; but they were idealistic enough to hope that those States would use their power for the good of all.

With the hindsight of 50 years, we can see that the United Nations has not fulfilled the vision that the founders had for it, but it succeeded well beyond what it was reasonable to expect of it at that time. The world was spared yet another global cataclysm. The quiet work of the United Nations, particularly through its specialized agencies, advanced the well-being and raised the standard of living of countless millions around the world.

Sadly, however, these considerable achievements were offset, in a fundamental way, by the continued and repeated defiance of the United Nations proclaimed purposes by so many men and nations, in so many instances. Almost from the beginning of the existence of the United Nations, and despite the United Nations, man persisted in his ability, propensity and willingness to use force in order to achieve his national or ideological ends. If peace was kept on a global scale, it was only because the mutual threat of nuclear annihilation deterred the launching of full-scale war. In the international economy, countries sought to beggar their neighbours through the unabashed use of a full range of protectionist and mercantilist tools.

Today, however, in the fiftieth year of the United Nations, we can say with a measure of plausibility, that the world has indeed been transformed; and we can hope, with a degree of realism, that the idealistic vision of the United Nations can be substantially attained.

One of the central aims of the United Nations — the liberation of colonized nations — has been largely achieved. The world's most mightily armed Powers have pulled back from the brink of nuclear annihilation. No longer do nuclear-armed ideological camps face each other in deadly confrontation, and mankind's survival no longer hangs in the perilous balance of mutual nuclear threat. The Philippines is gratified by the decision earlier this year to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and calls for the conclusion early next year of a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would put an absolute end to all nuclear testing.

The international community has reached agreement on the elimination of other devices of mass destruction and of inhumane weapons. In particular, the Philippines urges the ratification and the strengthening of the 1980 Convention on the Prohibition of Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects. We call for the early entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

In place of the use and threat of force, more and more nations have resorted to dialogue and reconciliation in dealing with disputes among themselves or with their neighbours, even in the case of conflicts which the "realistic" had considered to be insoluble. Almost throughout its entire existence, the United Nations has been seized with the conflicts in the Middle East. But only four days ago, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, with the approbation of other States in the area, took another significant step on the difficult road to peace. In South Africa, where a minority regime long oppressed the majority with systematic cruelty, a multiracial Government now administers the country with success that has surpassed even the world's most fervent expectations. In Latin America, old territorial disputes are now the subject of dialogue and consultation.

In our own region, the political settlement of the conflict in Cambodia and the emergence of an elected government in that long-suffering country stand as crowning achievements of the United Nations, as well as of the countries of the region — a triumph of negotiation over the force of arms. We welcome the accord that was so painstakingly crafted a year ago to avert the development of nuclear arms in the Korean peninsula. We urge the resumption of serious talks between North and South Korea as a further contribution to peace and reconciliation in our region. The Government of Myanmar has agreed on a cease-fire and has undertaken negotiations with all but one of the minority nationalities in Myanmar, a remarkable development in a country riven by inter-ethnic conflict for so long.

Matching the spread of the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation, faith in the efficacy of market forces and economic liberalization as a condition and stimulant of development has been sweeping the world. Policies arising from this faith have unleashed the productive energies of many of the world's people, a development largely responsible for the remarkable economic growth of countries in many parts of the world. Liberalization of international economic transactions and the resulting interdependence of the global economy have raised the stake of nations in one another's prosperity and have thus considerably brightened the prospects of enduring stability and peace. Thus, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, of which the Philippines is an active founding participant, is devoted solely to economic collaboration.

But one of its salutary by-products is the strengthening of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region, for now APEC participants have a growing stake in one another's economic progress and political stability.

We find in my country, the Philippines, a microcosm of the global trend of political reconciliation, economic liberalization, and regionalism. The peace talks that we are undertaking with rebel groups in the spirit of national reconciliation have brought a new stability to the country, providing the atmosphere of tranquillity so necessary for the resurgence of the economy.

The military rebels have availed themselves of a programme of amnesty. Many of them now pursue their ambitions for the country through the legal political system, with one of them recently elected as a Senator of the Republic. The Government has been negotiating in Europe with the self-exiled leaders of the Communist Party, which is now legal in the Philippines and whose members are free to contest Philippine elections.

With the assistance of the Committee of Six of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, under the chairmanship of Indonesia, negotiations are taking place with the Moro National Liberation Front. These

negotiations have resulted in a cease-fire and agreement on more than 80 per cent of the points at issue. Peace in the southern Philippines has made possible an extraordinary surge in the economic growth of that region. We have opened wide the doors to the Philippine economy, welcoming foreign investment, letting in the bracing wind of foreign competition. We have lowered our barriers to trade in fulfilment of international commitments or through unilateral measures.

One of the results of these structural reforms is a growth rate that is respectable even by the standards of our fast-growing region. There are bright prospects for the continuation of this growth rate because it proceeds from solid policy foundations and is taking place within a system of pluralistic democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

We have strengthened our bonds with our neighbours, through the Association of South-East Asian Nations above all. We have dealt with border questions and territorial disputes, including the conflicting claims in the South China Sea, through peaceful dialogue and consultation.

The general improvement in global security, the rising tide of global prosperity, and the intensification of regional cooperation should give rise to hope, but it should not induce complacency, as new threats have arisen to confront us and old ones have swollen in magnitude and virulence.

The dissolution of power blocs has unleashed latent tribalism that had been under authoritarian constraint. One of the most savage manifestations of this has been taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

International terrorism has become a global menace. The illicit trade in drugs undermines the fabric of society. Trafficking in women and children is a crime that cries out for international cooperative countermeasures.

The recent resumption of nuclear testing by two of the nuclear-weapon States poses an immediate threat to people's health, the natural environment, and the non-proliferation regime. We repeat our condemnation of these tests and ask that they stop — now and forever.

Even as the notion of economic liberalization has been almost universally embraced as a condition and catalyst for development, many countries have resorted to inventive measures of disguised protectionism. Numerous developing countries continue to labour, like Sisyphus, under the crushing burden of foreign debt.

Shortages of labour in resource-rich or rapidly industrializing economies have induced the large-scale migration of workers across national boundaries. Their presence in foreign lands has placed them in positions of vulnerability that require international cooperation for the protection of their rights and dignity as human beings.

The Philippines calls upon all States to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The Philippines is at one with the Group of 77 in calling for a United Nations-sponsored global conference on international migration.

My delegation intends to pursue with great vigour General Assembly resolutions on violence against women migrant workers and on trafficking in women and girls.

These are some of the more outstanding challenges that confront the United Nations as it enters its second half-century and approaches the next millennium. The United Nations, however, cannot respond to the challenges of today and the next century with the organization and procedures of 50 years ago. The nature of the new threats to international peace and security requires a review of United Nations peace-keeping operations in order to streamline them and make them more effective.

At this stage, I must stress that, whatever measures are agreed upon, they must be financed adequately, in proportion to the capacity and degree of responsibility of Member States and not by sacrificing any development programmes.

The United Nations is in a desperate financial situation. We cannot demand that it fulfil tasks that we are unwilling to finance. We cannot simply use the United Nations and then withhold from it the resources needed for its effective functioning. Year after year, we call for better management of the United Nations. The Philippines supports this call, and strongly articulated its position in this Hall last year.

At the same time, we must point out that the United Nations cannot be managed efficiently if it is constantly uncertain of the resources available to it. We therefore appeal to all Member States, particularly the larger contributors, to make up their arrears, to pay their dues, and to pay on time.

We have of late heard the proposition that in trying to achieve economy and efficiency in the United Nations we should look to the economic and social area, to those bodies whose mandate is to advance the interests of the developing countries — abolishing agencies here, gutting programmes there. We support the streamlining of multilateral development institutions and programmes. But we cannot accept moves to abolish the development agencies in the name of the "division of labour" or "comparative advantage". What the international community needs to do with respect to these agencies — and the Bretton Woods institutions and the regional development banks — is to augment their resources, not to reduce them. We deplore the position of some Powers that refuse to raise their contributions to the international and regional financial institutions, but in their desire to maintain a dominant role in those bodies prevent others from increasing their own share.

We have all come to this session ready to address the question of reform of the structure of the Security Council. The Council's structure is no longer adequate to meet the new and enlarged demands upon its mandate and no longer reflects the size and composition of the United Nations. The Philippines fully supports the enlargement of the Council's membership in order to ensure the equitable representation of all regions and of the developing countries.

Any reform, however, must go beyond the question of membership. The question of the veto must be reviewed, as must the Council's working methods and procedures, in order to ensure the greatest transparency possible and the participation of as broad a range of countries as possible. The vital nature of its decisions requires no less.

At the same time, the growing importance of the role of the United Nations requires that its membership, as well as its functions, reflect the realities of today. Accordingly, we need to consider the proposition that, in the high interests of universality, no significant group of people should be left without representation in the United Nations.

In this fiftieth year, as we recall the founding principles and fundamental goals of our Organization, as we review its mandate and as we assess its strengths and weaknesses, its achievements and shortcomings, we must never lose sight of the fact that all our labours in the United Nations have as their centre and object the human person — his or her security, dignity and well-being — above ideology, above religion, above even the State itself.

With the shrinking of this planet Earth, a process helped in no small measure by the United Nations itself, hundreds of millions more people are crying out for their own empowerment and for the universal respect of their rights and dignity.

In this fiftieth year of our Organization, we in the United Nations must heed their cry if we are to keep faith with its mandate and mission.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam.

Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election as President of the General Assembly at this session, a historic session that coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I am confident that under his guidance, our session will be crowned with success.

Let me take this opportunity also to convey our appreciation for the dynamic and effective activities undertaken by his predecessor, His Excellency Minister Amara Essy. We would like to express our appreciation also for the perseverance shown by His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali in serving the common cause of all nations for peace, national independence and development.

This session of the General Assembly is a special occasion for us to look back at the changes in the world and at the growth of the United Nations over the past 50 years, since the end of the Second World War. Out of the tumultuous course of mankind's history in those 50 years, let us identify what has changed, what has not, and what cannot change. Only with such a clear vision will we be able to chart our course into the twenty-first century and to find the confidence to build a United Nations that can meet the expectations of all of us.

While the first half of the twentieth century has left in the mind of mankind the haunting memories of two dreadful world wars, in the second half of this century, despite the fierce local wars that have taken place — such as those in Indochina, Korea and Viet Nam — nations have been spared the horrors of a global conflagration. Moreover, after several decades of an unbridled arms race, the world has chosen the course of reason, striving for the long-term goal of general and complete

disarmament, especially with regard to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The recent indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons gave rise to much hope. However, the nuclear testing undertaken right afterwards caused disillusion in international public opinion and has made it imperative for all nations — first and foremost the nuclear-weapon States — to redouble their efforts in a fully responsible manner, so as to complete the comprehensive test-ban treaty in the course of the next year.

While the threat of a new world war and a nuclear holocaust is receding, peace and security remain elusive for many regions and countries beset by racial, ethnic and religious conflicts, and terrorist activities that take on disquieting proportions. In the intractable case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a peaceful solution should be pursued, without the imposition of measures, from any quarter whatsoever, that may complicate the situation further and cause more suffering to the multi-ethnic population of Bosnia.

The past half-century can also be said to have been a shining chapter in the history of the struggle of peoples to regain their national independence, sovereignty and the right to be the masters of their own destinies, and to strive for well-being, freedom and equality within the international community. The international community has been following very closely the peace process in the Middle East and welcomes its recent progress. Only strong political will and respect for the fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people and the legitimate interests of all the parties concerned can bring about lasting stability in this region of the world.

In practice, however, the basic and universal principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality continue to be ignored or violated by reason of the unequal and undemocratic set-up of international relations and through impositions upon, and interference in, the internal affairs of other countries, for different reasons and with a variety of justifications.

At the end of this twentieth century, thanks to mankind's achievements in science and technology and in communication and production, and thanks also to the hard work of all nations, our world as a whole has become more prosperous and more alive, with the manifold increase in material and non-material flows and exchanges, thus facilitating better mutual understanding and closer relationships among nations. However, our conscience cannot rest easy in view of a reality that we cannot ignore: the fact that one-fifth of mankind still lives in abject poverty, and the challenges posed by the enormous gap between the annual per capita gross national product for the least developed countries — less than $200 — and that of advanced industrialized countries, which is more than a hundred times higher. Furthermore, all nations, no matter where in the world, face global problems that threaten our economic achievements and the progress made in enhancing the quality of life.

Nowadays, mankind has a clearer, more holistic awareness of development, peace and security. We understand better the close correlation and interaction between economic development and social development, between internal security and external security, and between economic, social and military security.

Another reality of the world today, which is of far-reaching significance to each nation and individual, is the increasing role of international law, which binds nations and circumscribes and harmonizes the behaviour of States through multilateral instruments and institutions. Such a role is all the more crucial in the light of the tendency to blur the boundaries between national and international jurisdiction, as well as to extend the enforcement of one country's laws beyond its borders. Recently, international opinion has been increasingly concerned about the fact that the implementation of United Nations sanctions is shifting towards punishment or retribution for private political motives, in contravention of the purposes originally assigned by the Charter. Nor can public opinion remain unconcerned by the fact that sanctions in reality affect mainly the life and health of the innocent civilian population, and therefore cannot accept the prolongation of sanctions regardless of their effectiveness and consequences. In view of this, international opinion cannot but protest the imposition of unilateral sanctions for several decades, such as is the case of the embargo against Cuba. We express our sincere sympathy for the hardships experienced by the Cuban people and strongly urge that the embargo against Cuba be lifted, and that the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly be promptly and effectively implemented.

In short, 50 years after the Second World War, the world offers us a scene of vivid contrasts between continuity and change, between stagnation and development, between division and integration, especially the vast and profound integration that unfolds before us under the impact of the trend towards interdependence,

regionalization and globalization. Moreover, the powerful vitality and steadfast determination which drive peoples to preserve their national traditions and cultural identities demonstrate their will to safeguard from within the inevitable process of international integration something stable and lasting, which links the present of each nation to the roots of its traditions, and the need to affirm the singularity of each society, each nation and each community, and not only of each individual. The history of the past 50 years is a clear testimony thereof.

Over the past half century, the United Nations has weathered the tests and trials of the cold war and of the immediate post-cold-war years to endure and grow. Its indispensable role as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nation States in a world characterized by rapid and complex changes and increasing interdependence has been recognized by all Members.

As I have mentioned, the United Nations has recorded some encouraging achievements for peace and development, for equality and justice. However, given the speed and scope of changes taking place in the world, it must be recognized that the United Nations has failed to reform and adjust itself in keeping with the new situation and with the trend of the times, and thus to address the needs of nations. We are of the view that the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations must strictly observe the principle of respect for independence, sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and should go hand in hand with the persevering search for a peaceful solution. The United Nations ought to draw the lessons of the successes and failures of its recent peace-keeping operations so as to better discharge the responsibility entrusted to it by the community of its Member States. It is certain that in a few weeks, during the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, our Heads of State and Government will voice the hopes that the peoples of the world place in our Organization. For this reason, it is imperative that we turn the United Nations into an effective instrument to serve the common ideals and interests of mankind in the next century. The challenge for the United Nations, as it tackles the burning issues of today's world, is to continue upholding the progressive spirit enshrined in its Charter and adequately to implement, with all due attention, both the "Agenda for Peace" and the "Agenda for Development", overcoming the discrepancy between the desirable and the possible so that the United Nations can be a true representative — in the fullest sense of the term — of the expectations and interests of its Members, in its structure and organization, its agenda, its mandate and its mode of operation. This requires that the General Assembly should play an "essential role" as the Secretary-General reminded us at the opening of this session, namely that by virtue of the principle of "equal rights ... of nations large and small", it is the General Assembly that is endowed with the democratic legitimacy of our global Organization.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We agree with the overall thrust of the draft declaration on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and believe that it is particularly important to reaffirm the principles of respect for independence, sovereignty and sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-interference in the jurisdiction and the internal affairs of nations, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force or threat to use force. At the same time, the positive role that the United Nations has played and should continue to play in helping nations exercise their right to self-determination and to development should not be forgotten. The declaration should not fail to address two topical issues. One is the need for a Security Council that is more effective, more representative and transparent in its workings, while the other is the need for adequate resources to enable the United Nations fully to carry out its mandate. Viet Nam recognizes a plain fact of everyday life, which is that whoever contributes more shall be entitled to more rights. But conversely, whoever has more rights will have to show greater responsibility. Therefore, the richest countries should set an example by meeting their financial obligations in full and on time, which is of vital significance for our Organization at this juncture. We particularly agree with the stress placed by the draft declaration on poverty as the scourge visited upon billions of people on our planet, as well as on the human person as the centre of the whole development process. Those are only some preliminary observations.

In this incredibly changing world, the Asia-Pacific region in general and South-East Asia in particular are entering a new era with profound changes and great promises for peaceful cooperation and dynamic development. Most striking is the common consciousness and efforts of the whole region directed towards building a peaceful and stable environment conducive to the development of each country in the region and of the region as a whole. As a country in the dynamic region and a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Viet Nam will make positive contributions toward those common objectives.

Viet Nam's official membership in ASEAN since last July, the participation of Laos and Cambodia as observers and Myanmar's accession to the Bali Treaty have opened up prospects for further strengthening cooperation throughout the region and for expanding ASEAN into an association of all 10 countries of the region. These are the foundation and components of a South-East Asia of peace, stability and prosperity. Together with the other countries concerned, the ASEAN countries recently held the second ASEAN Regional Forum, at which the participating countries agreed to promote cooperation on an equal footing among all parties, by taking the appropriate measures, and in the short term by stepping up confidence-building measures in order to consolidate peace and security in the region.

Alongside that favourable overall trend, there are potentially destabilizing factors in the region. The dispute in the Eastern Sea and other recent developments remain a source of concern for countries both within and outside the region. Regarding this issue, we would like to reaffirm once again our position, which is that the disputes in the Eastern Sea should be settled through peaceful negotiations in accordance with the principles contained in the Manila Declaration adopted by ASEAN in 1992, as confirmed at the recent ASEAN ministerial meeting in Brunei, and in conformity with international law, especially the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which entered into force at the end of 1994. Pending a fundamental and lasting solution to these disputes, all parties concerned should maintain the status quo and refrain from any action that might further complicate the situation, especially the use or threat of use of force.

For Viet Nam, 1995 has been a year of great historic significance. As we join the rest of the international community in preparing for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, our people are solemnly celebrating several other major events, especially the fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of our independence. During the past half century, our people have endured tremendous human sacrifice and material loss in order to safeguard our national independence. To rebuild and develop our homeland, we have overcome innumerable tests and trials, as well as the extremely heavy consequences of long and fierce wars. Thanks to the determination of the whole nation united in mind and in action, our reform and renewal process, now in its tenth year, has achieved major initial results, thus making it possible to move to a new stage of development: the industrialization and modernization of our country.

Recent years have seen the continuous development of our economy, with an average annual growth rate of 8.2 per cent, an annual increase in exports of 20 per cent, and a 40 per cent annual increase in foreign investment. The standard of living is steadily improving. Economic development is increasingly linked with social and cultural development. Our objective is to build a strong and prosperous Viet Nam with an equitable and civilized society. Alongside our economic reforms, we have carried out political reforms to build a State governed by the rule of law, and which is of the people, by the people and for the people. On the basis of our 1992 Constitution, we have promulgated a series of laws, codes and legal decrees in order ever more completely to ensure the rights and interests of all citizens, and at the same time to create a firm legal basis for governing the country. These all-round achievements constitute a firm guarantee of social and political stability and lay the foundation needed for future sustainable development.

Along with reform in all aspects of social life, Viet Nam has consistently pursued its foreign policy of broad openness, the thrust of which is to diversify and multilateralize its external relations in order to create a stable environment and external conditions conducive to the task of building and defending the country, and to enhance Viet Nam's position on the international scene.

To implement this policy, Viet Nam has established diplomatic relations with nearly 160 countries, including all the world's major Powers and leading economic and political centres. Viet Nam's accession to full membership of ASEAN, the signing of an agreement of cooperation with the European Union, and the normalization and establishment of full diplomatic relations with the United States all took place in July this year. That was no coincidence, but was the outcome of a whole process of implementing a foreign policy inspired by a new spirit, by which Viet Nam is willing to be the friend of all nations in the international community, and to strive for peace, national independence and development. This provides eloquent testimony to the correctness of our foreign policy and to its consonance with the trends of our times.

As it broadens its relations with all countries, Viet Nam is also endeavouring consistently to improve and strengthen relations with international organizations, including the international financial and monetary institutions, and is ready to participate in regional and global cooperation organizations. Following the normalization of its relations with the International

Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Asia Development Bank and its participation in the ASEAN Free Trade Area, Viet Nam is now actively preparing to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and the World Trade Organization at an appropriate time. Viet Nam continues to maintain close and effective cooperation with the United Nations and with specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

The achievements of its foreign policy provide a new impetus for Viet Nam to accelerate the process of regional and global integration, and to participate more effectively in global forums and institutions, with a view to tackling the pressing problems facing all mankind, and to contributing meaningfully to the common endeavour of the international community to achieve peace, national independence, friendship, cooperation among States and development.

Today and in the weeks to come, from every point on the horizon, peoples of the world, regardless of language, race or culture, are turning to this Hall, where the representatives of 185 countries are assembled at a historic moment marking half a century of the United Nations with the ardent hope and expectation that the Organization will truly enter a new era, in which its own motto, "United for a better world" can become a reality. There is no promise more dear to our hearts and no commitment more solemn than our determination to prepare ourselves for the common journey into the twenty-first century, to realize the noble purposes of the Charter of the United Nations for a better world and for a fairer and more reasonable world order that will meet the ardent hopes of the present generation and that will build a sound foundation for succeeding generations.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, His Excellency Mr. Alfred Serreqi, on whom I call.

Mr. Serreqi (Albania): It gives me special pleasure to congratulate Mr. Diogo Frietas do Amaral of Portugal on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. I take this opportunity to extend to him my best wishes for success in the deliberations of this important gathering, and I assure him of the full collaboration of the delegation of Albania.

I also congratulate Mr. do Amaral's predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, on the excellent way he conducted the work of the last session of the General Assembly.

To the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, I wish to express my highest regard for his unfailing endeavours to provide the Organization with ever more effective leadership.

My warmest greetings go to the Republic of Palau, the newest State Member of the United Nations.

Since March 1992 — the time of the final break with the Communist regime — Albania has made tremendous progress in its democratic processes. The building up and strengthening of political pluralism, the rule of law, respect for human rights in general and for those of minorities in particular, as well as the transition from a centralized to a market economy, constitute the main directions in which Albanian society is moving. The country is sustainably engaged in speedy economic reform supported by a whole new set of laws, and the results of intensive transformation are very tangible.

Certainly reform is not painless. In this regard, the Government is paying special and particular attention to improvement of the living conditions of some social groups that are more vulnerable to economic reform. I wish, on behalf of the Albanian Government, to avail myself of the occasion to express gratitude to the donor countries, the European Member States, the United States and the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as to international agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for the valuable assistance provided to Albania.

In its efforts to eliminate the consequences of fatal long isolation, Albania is convincingly engaged in an open policy and has firmly abided by one of the major objectives that the Government set out in its programme — the integration of the country into Europe, which implies the building of a Western-style society, adherence to its institutions and active participation in European life.

Our growing cooperation with the European Union, which we hope will in due course lead to the opening of negotiations on and the conclusion of the Europe agreement, is a process that enjoys the backing of all political parties and all strata of the population. With a view to achieving full integration, we attach special importance to cooperation with the Euro-Atlantic structures, primarily the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Albania is the first country of the region to have formally requested membership of NATO,

and it is engaged in active cooperation within the Partnership for Peace. In this spirit of close cooperation, Albania has offered action facilities to NATO, and it will continue to do so in the future, convinced that this will benefit peace and security in the Balkans.

To this end, and desirous of demonstrating in a practical way its commitment to peace and security, Albania has set up its first Albanian military unit to participate in the peace-keeping and humanitarian operations of the United Nations and will soon put this at the disposal of the Organization.

The tragedy of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is suffering the consequences of Belgrade's ambition to create a "Greater Serbia" — inspired by the philosophy of national chauvinism, the policy of "ethnic cleansing" and the forceful changing of borders — lies at the centre of the present-day Balkan crisis, concentrated in the former Yugoslavia. Identification of the causes and culprits of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina now makes it easier for the Balkan States and the international community at large to make realistic assessments of the situation in all the territories of the former Yugoslavia and to seek adequate approaches for solution.

It is a fact that the international community and its main actors have been present at all stages in dealing with the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, however, it has to be admitted that, despite the action taken so far, they have not always been consistent. For that reason, efficiency has for a long time left much to be desired.

The many resolutions of the United Nations and of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, the activities of the Contact Group, the projects offered and the plans suggested have not yet yielded the desired results. Nevertheless, we think that the United Nations peace force deserves special praise for the humanitarian assistance it has provided to the innocent civilian population. A special tribute should be paid to the soldiers, officers, diplomats and journalists who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Following recent developments, it appears that the situation in the crisis areas is more balanced, politically and militarily, and that it offers real possibilities for solution. However, it is still very complex, and there is still the risk of a spill-over of the conflict to other areas — a widely held view. In the face of this situation, we appreciate the fact that, on the initiative of the United States of America, the international community is reviewing its stand on this conflict, including insistence on thorough implementation of Security Council resolutions adopted pursuant to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. These provide for continuation of the sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs and Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the stepping up of diplomatic activity, backed by the use of NATO military intervention when necessary.

The Republic of Albania is deeply concerned about the grave situation in Kosova. The Serbian military and police regime that has been installed in Kosova, with the elimination of the autonomy that this federal unit of the former Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia enjoyed, is continuing widespread terror against the Albanian population. The brutality of the Serbian police is evident every day and in every part of Kosova. The apartheid policy and practices pursued by the Serbs against the Albanians have led to the compulsory exodus of hundreds of thousands of Albanians, mainly youngsters, to different countries of the world. Part of this systematic terror are the endless killings, the ransacking and the plotted political trials against the Albanians of Kosova.

As if this extremely tense and eruptive situation were not enough, the Belgrade authorities are now sending to Kosova, as colonists, the Serb refugees from Croatia and Bosnia. This grave provocation, under the guise of humanism for Serb refugees, is in reality part of the old plan of the Belgrade authorities to carry out "ethnic cleansing" in Kosova, which is inhabited to the extent of 95 per cent by Albanians, and forcefully change its ethnic-demographic composition.

The consequences of what Belgrade is doing to attain the "Greater Serbia" ambition are already common knowledge and have been internationally witnessed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. We appeal to the international community and to concerned humanitarian organizations not to be duped by the intentions of Belgrade and not to assist it to settle the Serb refugees in Kosova — an activity that falls short of being a simple humanitarian action.

We also call upon the international community not to ignore the extremely important issue of Kosova. The Belgrade authorities have clearly challenged General Assembly resolution 49/204, the resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva and the decisions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on Kosova. If Serbia is not put under international pressure to refrain from its policy of confrontation in Kosova, it will not be long before

another tragedy with unpredictable consequences explodes. The Kosova Albanian leaders have miraculously managed to avoid it so far through their peaceful resistance, but the question immediately arises: How long will they be able to do so?

The Republic of Albania holds that the United Nations, the major Powers and NATO should anticipate and take adequate measures in order to prevent a conflict in Kosova: demilitarize its territory; protect human and national rights of Albanians there; put an end to ethnic cleansing and Serb colonization; reopen the institutions of Kosova; create a climate of dialogue between Albanians and Serbs in Kosova, and between Pristina and Belgrade; open and continue dialogue in the presence of a third party.

Albania is of the view, and insists, that the Kosova issue be included in the agenda for discussion and solution of the problem of the former Yugoslavia. In the meantime, the lifting of sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro should be subject to the strict condition that there should be a complete and lasting solution of the Kosova issue. There is more than one problem to tackle and solve in Kosova; they all need to be addressed properly and not overlooked. When we see today the progress in solving the constitutional status of the entities in Bosnia, which we hope will be just and equitable and will satisfy all parties, we have reason to hope and believe that the international community will proceed in the right direction to solve the question of Kosova as well. The world is right in thinking that, in so doing, we are respecting one of the fundamental principles of the Charter, especially the right of peoples to self-determination. The application of double standards will undoubtedly generate future conflicts.

In order for the Balkans to be an area of peace, stability and prosperity, it is necessary to bring war to an end, to bring the perpetrators of the Bosnian tragedy before the Court and to punish them, to demilitarize over-armed States and areas, to reconstruct what was damaged by war, to settle the Kosova issue and to thaw the already frozen bilateral relations. Internal democratization of all States, the creation of the democratic space where Albanians live in the Balkans, as repeatedly stated by the President of the Republic, Sali Berisha, constitute a most positive response to any international initiative for peace and stability in the Balkans. Furthermore, transition to broad programmes of inter-Balkan and Euro-Balkan cooperation is also an absolute requirement for development and for full integration of the Balkans into developed and civilized Europe.

In the coming December, Albania will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of its membership in the United Nations. Over all these years the Republic of Albania has demonstrated its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter. While the region is living through a profound and complex crisis, Albania is testifying that it is a factor of peace and stability. It has never provoked conflicts or tensions between States and has repeatedly asserted its firm stand against the forceful alteration of internationally recognized borders. This is demonstrated first in its policy towards its neighbours.

I am glad to declare that bilateral relations with Greece have improved following a period of tension last year. Dialogue and good will, which Albania has always favoured, have prevailed, and today the two countries are taking concrete steps in the direction of extending, deepening and speeding up cooperation in fields of mutual benefit.

It is worth mentioning here that we are glad to see that the international community, in general, recognize the great improvement in the rights of the Greek minority in Albania in the last three years. The Albanian Government has consistently demonstrated its willingness to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedom for all the citizens, including members of the Greek minority, and its commitment to do so. We have always emphasized that the Greek minority in Albania constitutes a bridge of friendship and we are glad that this is not our view alone. There is no political reason whatsoever that could hinder this since the realization of rights stems from our political will and from the very essence of Albanian society.

As to the right of education in one's mother tongue, in addition to the measures already taken by the Government to apply international standards and fulfil its international commitments, such as the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the national legislation on education, in particular the law on private schools — which entered into force a few months ago — has resolved this question.

Albania maintains good relations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and supports the full integration of this Republic into international institutions. However, we encourage it to take concrete steps to improve the situation of the Albanians there and to ensure full respect for their human and national rights, including the right to education in their mother tongue. This is all the more so because of our conviction that equality

between citizens of any nationality leads to the integration of that country and that integration is to the benefit of all the citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and of stability in the region.

Albania does not hold a prejudiced view in its relations with Serbia and Montenegro, either. However, it should be said that their improvement is dependent on the renunciation of violence against and suppression of the Albanians in Kosova. Though Italy is across the sea, my country has considered, and considers, Italy a neighbouring country of great importance for bilateral relations and for the developments in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Our relations with this country are built on an ancient tradition and are characterized by very positive developments in all fields.

Albania attaches great importance to the work with a view to the reform of the Security Council. Albania is the only country from the Eastern European Group, except the newly created countries in the region, that has never served in the Security Council in its course of 40 years' membership in the Organization. We believe that the Member States, by giving Albania the first chance to sit in the Security Council, will offer encouragement and support to the good will of the small States for active participation in multilateral cooperation in the service of international peace and security, and will show that it will not take long for our fruitful discussions on the reform of the Security Council to be implemented. I would like to assure you that the election of Albania to the Security Council will be a contribution to peace and security in the troubled region of the Balkans as well.

In conclusion, I would like to express Albania's support for the United Nations, its desire to strengthen the Organization and its role in safeguarding international peace and promoting and supporting democracy, development and well-being.

The Acting President (interpretation from French): We have heard the last speaker on our list for the general debate at this meeting. One representative has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind Members that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now call on the representative of France.

Mr. Ladsous *(interpretation from French)*: Several delegations have mentioned the question of nuclear tests and one of them did so in particularly unacceptable and even disagreeable terms. Such statements require the French delegation to recall the facts and to place this last series of tests conducted by France in the proper context of the complete and final cessation of nuclear tests.

The programme of tests under way has to be seen for what it is — that is, a conclusion. The tests will be limited to eight at the most and will come to an end before the end of May 1996.

Our main objective is to achieve a truly meaningful test-ban treaty in 1996 — a treaty that will prohibit all nuclear-weapon tests and all other nuclear explosions. That is the major problem in connection with the scope of such a treaty, and the Assembly is aware that on 10 August 1995, in the Conference on Disarmament, France announced that it endorsed this objective and this formulation.

This is an extremely important choice. I repeat that if a test-ban treaty is signed in the conditions envisaged in the relevant General Assembly resolutions, France will in the future desist from all nuclear-weapons tests and all other nuclear explosions. This is the choice of the zero option, a choice that gives its full meaning to the signing of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. But to reach that goal and to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion, France was duty-bound, in the short period before the end of May 1996, to ensure for the future the reliability and safety of its weaponry. It was duty-bound to acquire an independent mastery of simulation techniques.

This programme to complete the tests makes it possible for France to advocate the most satisfactory and the strictest option for the test-ban treaty.

Some of the attacks directed at France are unfounded, unfair and vicious. In fact, this programme of tests does not adversely affect the environment; eminent international scientists have demonstrated — again very recently — that our tests are harmless. Moreover, this programme is in conformity with law and with the commitments undertaken by France. Utmost restraint is not the same thing as prohibition, and we have never ruled out completing this series of tests.

Incidentally, I should like to recall that a country that today described itself as our neighbour in the Pacific is really farther away from French Polynesia than New York is from Paris.

Finally, my delegation would recall that, for its part, France remains open to dialogue and cooperation with all States, those of the Pacific region and all others.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.